Newsletter of Deccan Birders (formerly Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh)
New Series Volume 20 Number 5 May 2023

FIELD TRIP: Sunday, 21st May 2023, 6.00AM: Nehru Zoological Park. Meeting Point: NMDC Junction, 5.20AM. Trip Coordinator(s): Srikanth Bhamidipati (Mobile: 97388-40070)

One of the largest Zoos in India, NZP sits next to the 200 year old Mir Alam Tank. Spread over 380 acres and housing 1500 species of birds and reptiles put together, the Zoo has always been a reliable birding destination for us, with the adjacent green corridor of the National Police Academy and Mir Alam Tank. One can see Flycatchers, Bitterns, Thick-knees and many other species.

This will be a half-day trip, so carry adequate water and breakfast/snacks, and protective gear if required. Strict Covid protocols will be followed; please ensure you wear masks, carry a sanitiser and maintain social distancing. Non-members are most welcome; however, they are requested to contribute Rs. 100/- per person to the Deccan Birders kitty. Deccan Birders T-Shirts and caps will be available for sale.

Trip Report: Ladakh, August 20-28, 2022

Text & Photos: Dr G Samuel Sukumar

A view of Leh

High in the Himalayas, the abode of snow-capped mountains, is Ladakh, the roof of the world. It is a land that I had always dreamt of visiting during my official tenure as geologist in the Geological Survey of India. The main purpose of this visit was not only to be on the top of the world, but also, to look for evidence of the origin of the mighty Himalayas.

How the Himalayas originated is a question that was answered by Dr. Alfred Wagner (1850-1950) with his theory of Continental Drift and Plate Tectonics in 1912. According to the theory, the earth is composed of giant plates called tectonic plates and, on these plates lie the continents and the oceans of the world. The continents are said to have originated 250 Mega annals (Ma) ago from a single land mass or supercontinent called Pangea, which was surrounded by a large ocean. Around 200 Ma ago, there was a sea stretch called Tethys along the latitudinal area presently occupied by the Himalayas. Around this period, the supercontinent Pangea gradually started to split into land masses, and moved in different directions about 70 Ma ago. The mountain building process began when two land masses collided with each other. And around 65 Ma it resulted in the gradual disappearance of the sea and creation of high mountain ranges. Although the major upheaval has passed, the Himalayas are still rising at the rate of 5 mm /year. That means the Himalayas are still geologically active and structurally unstable. For this reason, earthquakes are a frequent occurrence in the Himalayan region.

Evidence of these geological changes can be found in the fossilised remains found in the dry ocean bed of the Baltic region 250 Ma ago and also discovered in the Himalayas. Another example is the presence of saline water in Pangong Tso Lake which could have been part of the ocean at one time. Today this saltwater lake mesmerises visitors with its shades of turquoise when the sun's rays fall on it.

The Himalayas are considered as the folded mountain ranges formed due to the collision of the Indian plate with the Eurasian plate. Evidence of this is seen in this fold which is called the recumbent fold.

Recumbent fold

Yak

The terrain is mostly a lunar landscape with cold desert conditions. A few tribal people occupy the land and mostly depend on barley cultivation. Yak is domesticated for milk, fur, hide and dung. Even human night soil is retrieved annually from the raised dry toilets. The human excreta is covered after every use with ash from yak dung which is burnt to heat their homes during winter. The houses are built with unburnt clay bricks made by labourers from Bihar and West Bengal. The roofs are made up of dried willow tree logs and branches. The labourers have tanned skin due to the sun's radiation which is very high here. Mobile communication is very limited, and in many areas, electricity is generated from diesel generators for a limited time.

Ladakh lies between Central Asia to the north, China to the north and east, and Kashmir to the southwest. It is a part of the Central Asian Plateau, a vast lunar landscape with a desert climate. The day and night temperatures differ astronomically.

The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) arranged a birding camp from 20th to 28th August 2022 at Ladakh. Six of us from Deccan Birders – Nanda Kumar, DB Chaudhari, Shilka Chaudhari, Sheetal and Swetha Vyas, and I joined the BHNS trip. We took precautions and safeguards that are required to be taken to circumvent Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS). We reached Leh at 12.00 noon on 20th August. We were picked up at the airport and comfortably placed in warm rooms in the hotel Caravan Centre. We assembled for lunch and briefly rested to acclimatise.

Old Monastery at Leh

Shanti Stupa

In the evening we were taken to the Leh Monastery, Shanti Stupa and Leh market. Leh Monastery is a 9-level monastery built with wooden logs and mud bricks. The Shanti Stupa is a Buddhist *stupa* built in modern times. We also had a brief stroll in the market.

Mountain Chiffchaff

Oriental Turtle Dove

White Wagtail

On the 21st, we went for birding along the marshes of the Indus River looking for Ibisbills. As the current was strong and muddy and the flow heavy, we could not find the bird. We did spot many other birds, though: Long-tailed Shrike, White Wagtail, Mountain Chiffchaff, Oriental Turtle Dove, Rock Pigeons, Common Hoopoe, Common Rosefinch, Fire-fronted Serins, European Roller and the Large-eared Pika, a mammal found in these areas.

Common Hoopoe

European Roller

Large-eared Pika

Here we saw Sea Buckthorn berries (popularly known as Leh Berry) – yellowish-orange in colour, and a rich source of vitamin C. It is made into jams and juices. In the winter, these are food for the birds.

Sea Buckthorn

After lunch we visited the Hemis National Park. The entry into the park had outcrops of sedimentary rocks, mostly ferruginous (iron-rich) conglomerates – cobble-sized, well-rounded quartzites. We spotted birds like the Black Redstart, White-winged Redstart, Horned Lark, Chukar, wagtails, etc.

Black Redstart pair

White-winged Redstart

Horned Lark

Chukar

We were lucky to see a whole family of Bharal or Blue Sheep grazing on the hill slope very close to the village and barley fields. They generally graze high above, occasionally peeping over the rocky ledges.

A herd of domesticated Yak passed by – wild ones are very rarely seen. Yaks in Ladakh are a source of meat, milk, butter, leather for boots, fur for ropes, dung for fertilizer and for heating in the winter. The burnt ash is not wasted but used in the specially made high and dry toilets, to cover the night soil and is annually taken out through an opening at the base and used as organic fertilizer in their fields.

Blue Sheep (Bharal)

Barley

The only crop grown is barley. The water from melting snow flows as streams all along and is used for irrigation. Open areas are used as camping sites. While returning from Hemis, we stopped by to see the Mallards, Common Hoopoes and Eurasian Magpies near a local pond.

Mallard female

Eurasian Magpie

On the 22nd, we started for Pangong Sor Lake (14,500 ft) about 155 km from Leh. We had to drink water periodically as the elevation increased and the oxygen in the atmosphere was low. We passed through Chang La Pass (17, 688 ft), the third highest motorable road in the world.

En route, we saw White-winged Redstarts, Robin Accentor, Himalayan Marmots, Mountain Weasel, Pallas's Gull and Brown-headed Gull.

Robin Accentor

Himalayan Marmot

Mountain Weasel

Pallas's Gull

In the afternoon we reached the shores of Pangong Sor Lake. It was a mesmerising sight with its waters the shades of blue and turquoise. Pangong Lake, one of the most famous lakes in Ladakh, derives its name from the Tibetan word, 'Pangong Tso', which means 'high grassland lake'.

Pangong Lake

Pangong Lake is an endorheic lake (a basin or lake: having no outflow to an external body of water such as a river or ocean, and only losing water through evaporation or seepage into the ground), spanning eastern Ladakh and West Tibet. We stayed at Pangong Panorama which was partially tented and hutment accommodation. In the evening we went for a stroll along the banks of Pangong and it was quite cold. After a sumptuous dinner we retired to the comfort of warm beds. Electric supply is given from 6.30 in the morning to 10.30 in the evening, during which time all our batteries (mobiles and cameras) had to be charged. There is no mobile connectivity in this area.

On the 23rd, after an early breakfast, we moved out of Pangong for Hanle about 180 kilometres away. As we travelled along the road which followed the banks of Pangong Lake, we saw the 'four fingers', now guarded by our valiant Indian army, as they patrolled the mountain peaks for intrusions by the Chinese. With brief stops for birding, we reached Hanle and stayed at Gua Tibetan Gazelle Homestay, where we had home-cooked dinner.

Eurasian Eagle Owl

Upland Buzzard

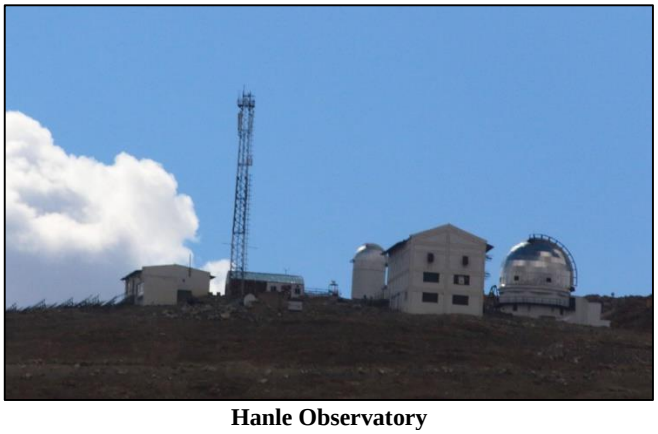
Pallas's Cat

A natural arch

In the Hanle marshes we saw the Black-necked Crane, Eurasian Eagle Owl, Upland Buzzard, Pallas's Cat, and House Sparrows. We could also see a lone Tibetan Wolf in the fields.

House Sparrow feeding young

Tibetan Wolf



Hanle Observatory

There is a Hanle Observatory on a hilltop. The night skies are clear here and devoid of dust and light haze, making it possible for us to see the stars and the Milky Way.

On the 24th, we went birding around Hanle marshes. We spotted a solitary Black-necked Crane at the edge of a barley field. It gave us enough opportunity to photograph this bird before it flew to join a juvenile and another adult. There were several juveniles and pairs in this area.

Hanle Monastery

We made a brief visit to the Hanle Monastery which was preparing for the annual festival of traditional dance with masks. Most of these dances are accompanied by Surna, Daman, Piwang which are musical instruments. In the monasteries they blew the Tibetan horn.

Common Raven

Black-necked Crane adult (L) and juvenile (R)

Desert Wheatear

On 25th we went to the Tsokar Sor Lake. We started from Hanle and en route saw the Upland Buzzard sitting on a rock by the edge of the river, a pair of ravens on a telephone pole, Eurasian Roller, Desert Wheatear, Ruddy Shelduck, Tibetan Wild Ass or Kiang, Black-necked Crane pair with a juvenile, Hill Pigeons, Sulphur-bellied Warbler, Tibetan Snowfinches, etc.

Tibetan Wild Ass (Kiang)

Sulphur-bellied Warbler

Tibetan Snowfinch

We reached Tsokar and stayed at Durk Resort. In the evening we walked around the marshes till the village of Tsokar where we saw Twites. Horned Larks, Hill Pigeons, some Snowfinches, etc.

Hill Pigeon

The Tso Kar or Tsho Kar is a fluctuating salt lake known for its size and depth and is situated in the Rupshu Plateau and valley in the southern part of Ladakh. It is called Tso Kar, meaning 'white lake', because of the white salt efflorescence found on the margins due to the evaporation of highly saline water. The Tso Kar Basin is an A1 Category Important Bird Area (IBA) as per Bird Life International and a key staging site in the Central Asian Flyway. It is also recognized as India's 42nd Ramsar site.

On 26th, we drove along the marshes on one side and the gradually sloping mountains on the other. We saw a pair of Red Foxes warming themselves in the rising sun.

Red Fox

Citrine Wagtail

In the marshes we spotted wagtails, both Grey and Citrine. In the afternoon we went to the other side of the Tso Kar Lake. This lake is composed of both saline and fresh water and is divided by a thin landmass. Salt precipitations were seen as white masses resembling snow. This was used as common salt earlier. However, with improvement in transport, salt is brought from nearby towns.

Tibetan Sandgrouse

At the edge of the lake we saw Upland Buzzards sitting on the rocks. The drive was to see the Tibetan Sandgrouse and Groundpeckers. From a distance we saw a flock of Sandgrouse busily feeding. Before we reached this spot of open field, we saw adult Horned Larks, Twite and Hill Pigeons, all busily picking things from the ground.

Twite

Blanford's Snowfinch

Little Owl

On 27th early morning at 5.45 am, we went out to see the Little Owl. We were lucky to spot one by the roadside, sitting on a wolf trap rock edge. I got a few good, clear shots of this very shy bird before it moved to a safe distance.

We returned to the Durk Resort, had breakfast, and after loading our luggage, we started on our return journey. We crossed the Tanglang La Pass (14,482 ft), considered the second highest motorable pass. We spotted the Lammergeier or the Bearded Vulture juvenile on the ground. The guide showed us its nest. The adults were not to be seen.

Mountain Vole

By the roadside a lone Mountain Vole was busily eating grass. I had seen several holes in the fields and marshes made by voles, and I thought I would return without seeing one. This Mountain Vole was so busy munching that it gave me time to take a few video shots. The Voles and Pikas were busy collecting grass and other food material, enough to be stored in their holes or burrows for their hibernation during the winter, which was just a few months away.

We reached Leh and were back in the Caravan Hotel. Most of us went shopping in the Leh market to purchase dry apricots, walnuts and some souvenirs.

The next day we flew back to New Delhi. The aircraft rose high above the snow-clad Himalayas. We were happy that we drove on some of the highest motorable passes and saw many endemic birds and mammals living on the roof of the world – Ladakh.

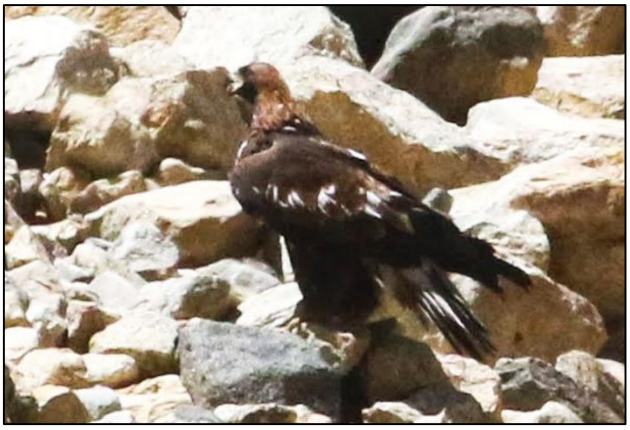
The list of birds seen during the trip is given below:

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name
BIRDS					
1	Chukar	*Alectoris chukar*	16	Black-necked Crane	*Grus nigricollis*
2	Bar-headed Goose	*Anser indicus*	17	Common Moorhen	*Gallinula chloropus*
3	Ruddy Shelduck	*Tadorna ferruginea*	18	Common Coot	*Fulica atra*
4	Gadwall	*Anas strepera*	19	Tibetan Sandgrouse	*Syrrhaptes tibetanus*
5	Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*	20	Common Redshank	*Tringa totanus*
6	Northern Pintail	*Anas acuta*	21	Common Greenshank	*Tringa nebularia*
7	Red-crested Pochard	*Netta rufina*	22	Common Sandpiper	*Actitis hypoleucos*
8	Common Hoopoe	*Upupa epops*	23	Pallas's Gull	*Ichthyaetus ichthyaetus*
9	Common Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*	24	Brown-headed Gull	*Chroicocephalus maculipennis*
10	Eurasian Eagle Owl	*Bubo bubo*	25	Black-headed Gull	*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*
11	Little Owl	*Athena noctura*	26	River Tern	*Sterna aurantia*
12	Rock Pigeon	*Columba livia*	27	Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*
13	Hill Pigeon	*Columba rupestris*	28	Lammergeier (Bearded Vulture)	*Gypaetus barbatus*
14	Oriental Turtle Dove	*Streptopelia orientalis*	29	Upland Buzzard	*Buteo hemilasius*
15	Laughing Dove	*Spilopelia senegalensis*	30	Long-tailed Shrike	*Lanius schach*

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name
31	Black-billed Magpie	*Pica pica*	49	Hume's Short-toed Lark	*Calandrella acutirostris*
32	Red-billed Chough	*Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax*	50	Eurasian Skylark	*Alauda arvensis*
33	Yellow-billed Chough	*Pyrrhocorax graculus*	51	Horned Lark	*Eremophila alpestris*
34	House Crow	*Corvus splendens*	52	House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*
35	Carrion Crow	*Corvus corone*	53	Citrine Wagtail	*Motacilla citreola*
36	Common Raven	*Corvus corax*	54	Grey Wagtail	*Motacilla cinerea*
37	Hume's Groundpecker	*Pseudopodoces humilis*	55	White Wagtail	*Motacilla alba*
38	Blue Rock Thrush	*Monticola solitarius*	56	Alpine Accentor	*Prunella collaris*
39	Bluethroat	*Luscinia svecica*	57	Robin Accentor	*Prunella rubeculoides*
40	Black Redstart	*Phoenicurus ochruros*	58	Brown Accentor	*Prunella fulvescens*
41	Desert Wheatear	*Oenanthe deserti*	59	Tibetan Snowfinch (Henri's Snowfinch)	*Montifringilla henrici*
42	Winter Wren	*Troglodytes hiemalis*	60	Fire-fronted Serin	*Serinus pusillus*
43	Cinereous Tit	*Parus cinereus*	61	Twite	*Linaria flavirostris*
44	Eurasian Crag Martin	*Ptyonoprogne rupestris*	62	Plain Mountain Finch	*Leucosticte nemoricola*
45	Northern House Martin	*Delichon urbicum*	63	Blanford's Snowfinch (Plain-backed Snowfinch)	*Pyrgilauda blanfordi*
46	Mountain Chiffchaff	*Phylloscopus sindianus*	64	Brandt's Mountain Finch	*Leucosticte brandti*
47	Sulphur-bellied Warbler	*Phylloscopus griseolus*	65	White-winged Redstart	*Phoenicurus erythrogastrus*
48	Lesser Whitethroat	*Sylvia curruca*	66	Lesser Sand Plover	*Charadrius mongolus*

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name
OTHER FAUNA			**FLORA**		
1	Blue Sheep (Bharal)	*Pseudois nayaur*	1	Rheum	*Rheum tibeticum*
2	Wild Yak (Dong)	*Bos mutus*	2	Khamchu	*Tanacetum gracile*
3	Tibetan Wild Ass (Kiang)	*Equus kiang*	3	Woolly Catmint	*Nepeta floccosa*
4	Pallas's Cat (Trakshan)	*Otocolobus manul*	4	Red-seeded Dandelion	*Taraxacum erythrospermum*
5	Tibetan Wolf (Changu)	*Canis lupus chanco*	5	Glacier Wormwood	*Artemisia glacialis*
6	Red Fox (Whatse)	*Vulpes vulpes*	6	Chicory	*Cichorium intybus*
7	Mountain Weasel	*Mustela altaica*	7	Sea Buckthorn	*Hippophae rhamnoides*
8	Himalayan Marmot	*Marmota himalayana*			
9	Woolly Hare	*Lepus oiostolus*			
10	Ladakh Pika	*Ochotona ladacensis*			
11	Large-eared Pika	*Ochotona macrotis*			
12	Stoliczka's Mountain Vole	*Alticola Stoliczkanus*			

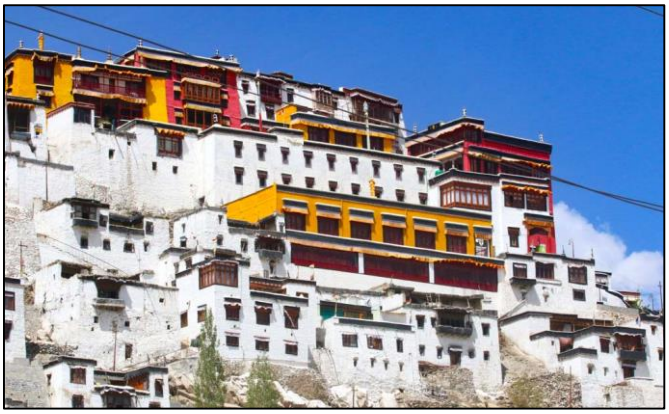
Some other photos taken during the trip :



Golden Eagle

Hume's Short-toed Lark

Folding landscape in Ladakh



Thiksey Monastery

Apricot

Glacier Wormwood

Woolly Catmint

Red-billed Chough

Red-seeded Dandelion

Rheum tibeticum

Pashmina

Black-headed Gull

Gadwall

Bar-headed Goose

Ladakh Pika

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WE LOVE OUTDOORS

Report: Penjarla, Mahbubnagar District, March 18-19, 2023

Text & Photos: Dhiraj & Vijaya Kaveri

The children during the trip

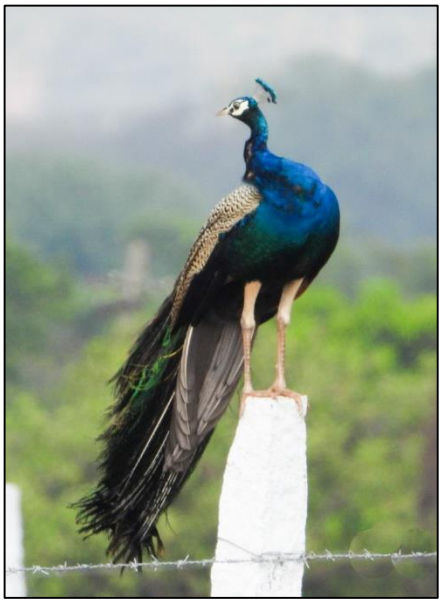
As exams got over, the students of our Stay Active Kids Program wanted to go for an outdoor overnight camping trip. We decided to plan a short trip to a farm house in Penjarla off Bangalore Highway, which is just 40 kms from our community PBEL City.

While we were worried about camping in the hot temperature, the weather in Hyderabad took a sudden turn with heavy showers, thunder and at some places hailstorms. So as to not disappoint the kids, we decided to go ahead with the plan. It was a short weekend trip from March 18 (Saturday afternoon) to March 19 (Sunday morning).

The camping was organized by our friend Ramya, while the local arrangements were done by caretaker Raju and his family. Ramya's friend Venu took care of the stargazing session where we all observed Sunspots, Nebula, Venus and Morning Moon. At night we had a campfire and some games before we retired to our tents.

A view of the camp

The next morning, we started with our favourite activity – the Bird Walk. The kids brought along their small binoculars, a guidebook, and sketch pens to write down the birds' names, while the parents accompanied us with equal enthusiasm. Vijaya and I were ready with our birding kit.



Indian Peafowl male

Yellow-wattled Lapwing

The farm house was surrounded by tall trees, shrubs, open plots, grasslands and farmland. In a span of 90 minutes, we identified around 23 bird species, like Indian Peafowl, Rufous Treepie, Eurasian Collared Dove, Laughing Dove, Yellow-wattled Lapwing, Little Egret, Green Bee-eater, Indian Jungle Crow, Black Drongo, Indian Robin, Common Myna, Red-vented Bulbul etc.

Eurasian Collared Dove

Red-vented Bulbul

For most of the kids it was like a discovery and treasure hunt – when they saw the same bird a second time and tried identifying it, they felt excited as if they were on a treasure hunt! Even the adults started enjoying our activity and got drawn towards it. At the end we shared the list with all and discussed birds, trees and nature.

Red-wattled Lapwing

Indian Robin

It was a short but fun learning outing for kids accompanied by parents. Bird watching is a silent, peaceful, engaging, meditative and enriching activity. It will now remain a permanent feature of all Stay Active Outdoor events. As promoters of health & environment we feel birds are an excellent gateway to observe the beauty of nature and understand the local ecology and biodiversity.

Green Bee-eater

The participants at the camp

The full list of birds seen during the trip is given below:

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name
1	Indian Jungle Crow	*Corvus macrorhynchos*	12	Indian Peafowl	*Pavo cristatus*
2	Black Drongo	*Dicrurus macrocercus*	13	Common Myna	*Acridotheres tristis*
3	Indian Robin	*Saxicoloides fulicatus*	14	Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*
4	Red-vented Bulbul	*Pycnonotus cafer*	15	Great Egret	*Ardea alba*
5	Eurasian Collared Dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*	16	Yellow-wattled Lapwing	*Vanellus malabaricus*
6	Ashy Prinia	*Prinia socialis*	17	Cattle Egret	*Bubulcus ibis*
7	Painted Stork	*Mycteria leucocephala*	18	House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*
8	Ashy-crowned Sparrow Lark	*Eremopterix griseus*	19	Green Bee-eater	*Merops orientalis*
9	Red-wattled Lapwing	*Vanellus indicus*	20	Laughing Dove	*Streptopelia senegalensis*
10	Long-tailed Shrike	*Lanius schach*	21	Pale-billed Flowerpecker	*Dicaeum erythrorhynchos*
11	Little Cormorant	*Microcarbo niger*			

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Bird Humour

Umesh Mani

(From Instagram, April 11, 2023)

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Bird of the Month

Text and Photos: Umesh Mani

Stork-billed Kingfisher (*Pelargopsis capensis*)

Stork-billed Kingfisher (Thrissur, Kerala, January 8 & 9, 2023)

Order: Coraciiformes
Family: Alcedinidae
Genus: *Pelargopsis*
Species: *P. capensis*
Size: 35 cm

Description & distribution: The Stork-billed Kingfisher, earlier *Halcyon capensis*, is a tree kingfisher that is widely but sparsely distributed, and is resident across its range, which spans across the tropical parts of the Indian subcontinent and South-east Asia.

Thirteen sub-species are recognized: the nominate *P. c. capensis*, seen in Nepal, India and Sri Lanka), *P. c. osmastoni* (Andaman Islands), *P. c. intermedia* (Nicobar Islands), *P. c. burmanica* (Myanmar, Indochina, northern parts of Malay Peninsula), *P. c. malaccensis* (central and southern parts of Malay Peninsula, Riau Archipelago, Lingga Islands), *P. c. cyanopterix* (Sumatra, Bangka Island, Belitung Island), *P. c. simalurensis* (Simeulue Island, off the coast of Sumatra), *P. c. sodalis* (Banyak, Nias, Batu and Mentawai Islands, off the coast of Sumatra), *P. c. innominata* (Borneo), *P. c. javana* (Java), *P. c. floresiana* (Bali to Flores in the Lesser Sunda Islands), *P. c. gouldi* (north Philippines) and *P. c. gigantea* (central and south Philippines). The sub-species mainly show some differences in plumage, but *P. c. gigantea* has a white head, neck and shoulders. The insular forms, *P. c. nesoeca* of the Nias and Batu Islands, and *P. c. isoptera* of Mentawai Island, have been subsumed within *P. c. sodalis*.

Interestingly, the birds of India were first placed in sub-species *P. c. gurial*, but this was later merged with the nominate sub-species after it was found that the type specimen, earlier believed to have come from the Cape of Good Hope in Africa, was identified as having actually originated from Chandannagar in West Bengal.

It is a large kingfisher. The adult has an olive-brown head and pale reddish bare skin around the eyes, dark greenish-blue mantle and upperparts, blue wings and tail (and a paler blue rump, obvious in flight), while the underparts and neck are buff-orange. The very large stork-like bill and legs are scarlet or bright red, with a purplish distal end. Sexes are similar. Juvenile birds show dusky edges to the feathers of breast and hind neck.

Habitat & behaviour: The Stork-billed Kingfisher inhabits well-wooded habitats near lakes, rivers or coasts. It tends to perch quietly while waiting to spot prey, and can easily be missed in spite of its large size. It is quite territorial, and may even chase larger birds like eagles and other such predators. Its diet consists mainly of fish, frogs, crabs, rodents, reptiles, and young birds and eggs. The flight of the Stork-billed Kingfisher is laboured and flapping, but direct. The call is a loud and far-reaching *peer-por-por* repeated about every 5 seconds, as well as a cackling *ke-ke-ke-ke-ke-ke* contact call, repeated 6-10 times.

Nesting: The Stork-billed Kingfisher breeds generally between January and July. Like other kingfishers, the nest is the typical horizontal tunnel excavated in the raised banks of forest streams, vegetated edges of water bodies, decaying trees, or tree termite nests. The usual clutch consists of 4-5 roundish oval, glossy white eggs.

Local name: The Stork-billed Kingfisher is known as *'Bada kilkila'* or *'Badami kourilla'* in Hindi, *'Gurial'* in Bengali (a name derived from the original sub-species name), *'Kukuluppan'* or *'Meenkotti'* in Tamil, and *'Kandu taleya meenchulli'* or *'Kakka ponman'* in Malayalam.

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